



## DEFEATING DIACOURAGEMENT

Lesson 2 – Discouraged People in the Bible

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Why should we defeat discouragement? Because it brings glory to Jesus Christ!

We need to tell God how we feel when we're discouraged. After all, you can't tell God anything he doesn't know. You can't surprise him or shock him.

J. I. Packer says this so well in his classic, *Knowing God*:

"There is tremendous relief in knowing that His love to me is utterly realistic, based at every point on prior knowledge of the worst about me, so that no discovery now can disillusion him about me, in the way I am so often disillusioned about myself, and quench His determination to bless me. There is, certainly, great cause for humility in the thought that He sees all the twisted things about me that my fellow-men do not see (and am I glad!) and that He sees more corruption in me than that which I see in myself (which, in all conscience, is enough). There is, however, equally great incentive to worship and love God in the thought that, for some unfathomable reason, he wants me as His friend, and desires to be my friend, and has given His Son to die for me in order to realize this purpose."

David has given us such a rich treasury in his Psalms. And you will notice that he never covered up. He always got his feelings out in the open.

Psalm 55:1 - 8:

*Listen to my prayer, O God, do not ignore my plea; 2-hear me and answer me. My thoughts trouble me and 3-I am distraught because of what my enemy is saying, because of the threats of the wicked; for they bring down suffering on me and assail me in their anger. 4-My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me. 5-Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me. 6-I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. 7-I would flee far away and stay in the desert. 8-I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm."*

What are the various statements made by David which would indicate that he is discouraged?

What caused David to be discouraged?

How did David defeat his times of discouragement?

- He identified the discouragement.
- He called on God to deliver him.

Psalm 55: 16 - 19:

*As for me, I call to God, and the LORD saves me. <sup>17</sup> Evening, morning and noon I cry out in distress, and he hears my voice. <sup>18</sup> He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me. <sup>19</sup> God, who is enthroned from of old, who does not change—he will hear them and humble them, because they have no fear of God.*

It's very important for us to develop a discipline and a pattern of taking these issues of discouragement in our lives right to the Lord regularly. And this comes at a time when the last thing we want to do is to be disciplined.

David regularly called on God for deliverance:

Psalm 142:1-2:

*I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble.*

Do you think it's right for David—and us—to complain to the Lord?

If you complain to other people, what is likely to happen?

If you just gripe and grumble to yourself, what is likely to happen?

This is a biblical exercise called *lament*. God welcomes our laments.

In his very helpful book, *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy*, Mark Vroegop says:

“Lament is how you live between the poles of a hard life and trusting in God’s sovereignty. Lament is how we bring our sorrow to God. Without lament we won’t know how to process pain. Silence, bitterness, and even anger can dominate our spiritual lives instead. . . Lament is how Christians grieve” (p. 21).

Can you think of another great man of God who practiced the “morning, noon and night” prayer schedule? -

The third thing David did to defeat discouragement was:

- He focused on who God is and affirms his trust in God.

David didn't stay in complaint mode.

**Psalm 55:18 - 23:**

*He rescues me unharmed from the battle waged against me, even though many oppose me.<sup>19</sup> God, who is enthroned from of old, who does not change. he will hear them and humble them, because they have no fear of God.<sup>20</sup> My companion attacks his friends; he violates his covenant.<sup>21</sup> His talk is smooth as butter, yet war is in his heart; his words are more soothing than oil, yet they are drawn swords.<sup>22</sup> Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.<sup>23</sup> But you, God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of decay, the bloodthirsty and deceitful will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you.*

From verse 18 to the end of **Psalm 55**, David states positive truths about God.

1. **Vs. 18** - God is our rescuer.
2. **Vs. 19** - God doesn't change.
3. **Vs. 19** - He is from of old--no beginning, no ending
4. **Vs. 22** - He will never let the righteous be shaken.

**John 17:3:** *Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.*

Theology is the knowledge of God, and we need to know God well. Otherwise, we don't have the foundation we need to assure us - especially when we're discouraged - that the God we're calling us is able to deliver us. The better we know God, the more power we'll have over discouragement.

**Conclusion:**

Some key lessons we learn from David:

- When you're discouraged, get it out in the open.
- Cry to God for help.
- Don't forget who God is and what he has promised to you. Repeat what you know to be true.

In her amazing book, *Switch On Your Brain*, Christian pathologist, Dr. Caroline Leaf, tells how the brain changes as our thoughts change. She says,

“When you go over and over something, reading it, thinking about it, writing it down, and then repeating the process, you deepen your knowledge and understanding, direct your attention, and grow nerve cells. . . . Your brain becomes *what* you focus on and *how* you focus” (p. 108).

She points out that when you choose to repeat something over and over, you change your thought life and that changes you.

Proverbs 23:7a: *For as he (a person) thinks in his heart, so is he. (NKJ)*

If you're in the depths of discouragement—or even depression—I truly believe you can change your feelings, your attitudes and by God's grace, pull yourself out of that state by choosing to repeat what you know to be true about God – over and over and over and over.

The adverse is true: When you continually focus on the wrong things, negative things, discouraging things, repeating and re-living them in your mind endlessly, you change your brain and that creates “gutters of discouragement” that are more and more difficult to change.

### **Suggested Assignment:**

Learn to lament biblically. Here are some helpful Psalms of lament:

- Psalm 44
- Psalm 60
- Psalm 74
- Psalm 79
- Psalm 80
- Psalm 85
- Psalm 90

Memorize Psalm 142:1-2:

*I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy. I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble.*



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